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The *première* of the new adaptation, in the new theatre of Leipsic on the 24th and 25th of March, 1907, was prepared at great pains and expense under the personal supervision of Professor Witkowski and Director Volkner. The former has attempted to give his conception of the poet's meaning, both by innovations in the stage setting and in the interpretation of the chief rôles (cf. the full stage directions and introductions to the text). In the opening scenes Faust does not appear as an old man, as he is commonly represented, but as in his prime, and full of a virile energy which is brought out strongly in the monologues, in striking contrast to the solemn pathos with which they are usually declaimed. For Professor Witkowski holds that such an interpretation of the character is far more in harmony with the passionate yearning expressed in the lines, and that the transition to the ardent lover of the Gretchen tragedy is thus rendered far less abrupt and more easily comprehensible, notwithstanding the "thirty years" of which the witch's potion is supposed to relieve the hero. The superiority of this theory over the customary interpretation is not strikingly manifest in the Leipsic performance, due in part, perhaps, to the mediocre play of actor Holstein, to whom the rôle has been entrusted. The Mephisto of Herrn Walther and the Gretchen of Frä. Bonnard, on the contrary, are brilliantly done. The double character of the former, devilish rage under a mask of cold cynicism, and the maidenly artlessness of the latter early in the play, combined with a remarkable depth of pathos in the cathedral and prison scenes, are highly effective. The rich and elaborate stage setting is remarkably realistic, and it is incomprehensible that its effect should be counteracted at times by trifles which might easily be avoided. We can overlook the absence from the stage of the "evil spirit" and the "poodle," but the howling of the latter, at least, ought not to be left entirely to the imagination of the hearer, while visible cords which should be invisible, entrances and exits on foot which should, and could, easily be accomplished by means of swinging stages, and occasional slight inconsistencies of location are far less excusable in an inscenation of the pretensions of this one.

While the critics are not fully agreed as to the merits of the new production, it has made, on the whole, an excellent impression, and the consensus of opinion is that Professor Witkowski has given the public a clear and practical, as well as scholarly adaptation of *Faust*, which will doubtless not soon be displaced.

Leipsic.

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THE FIGURATIVE NEGATIVE IN ROMANCE LITERATURE.

GUSTAV DREYLING: *Die Ausdrucksweise der übertriebenen Verkleinerung im altfranzösischen Karlsepos.*¹

The researches made twenty years ago by Gustav Dreyling into the employment of the complementary negative in reality covered a far wider field than that of the French epic poems. Indeed, the list of complementary negative expressions which he found in Old French and Old Italian is so exhaustive that it is worth while to add some few expressions which were not included by Dreyling, and which will serve to make still more complete our knowledge of a linguistic usage in which the Romance languages show such fertility.

Dreyling follows his predecessors in accounting for the extraordinary development of these figurative negatives in Old French by a striving on the part of the *trouvères* for an image which should strike the imagination of the popular audience which listened to the *chansons de geste* and to other forms of popular literature. It seems to me that a better explanation is found in the requirements of the *trouvère*, reciting from memory, for a great number of *chevilles* which should serve as rhyme tags in the rapid manufacture of verse which was exacted from him. As a matter of fact, these negatives are found almost exclusively in *ex tempore* genres, such as the *miracles*, *fabliaux* and *chansons de geste* (not in the elegant rhymed

¹See *Ausgaben und Abhandlungen aus dem Gebiete der romanischen Philologie*, veröffentlicht von E. Stengel, No. lxxxii, Marburg, 1888.

couplets of the *matière de Bretagne*), and, further, at the end of the verse where the significant substantive falls in with the assonance of the *laisse*. Such words as *bouton*, *gant*, *mie*, *denier*, *pois*, &c., then have a definite function. For the same reason of exigency, one might expect a prodigality of similar expressions in the Spanish *romances*. Yet, they are almost entirely absent; doubtless, because the *romances* offered no such strain upon the memory of the reciter, and because the verses are already so short that there is no space for an elaborated negative expression. I should account for the relative frequency of the figurative negative in the Italian court epic upon the same ground as has been suggested in the case of the Old French. The court epic poets, though they wrote and did not recite, spun their story out beyond all measure and doubtless grasped at any ready means to terminate one more verse in their endless narratives. They use the same expressions to a wearisome excess, showing by no means the inventive originality and spontaneity of the French *trouvères*.

The explanation offered above will further account for the poverty of such expressions in modern literature. When Mark Twain says in *Huckleberry Finn*: "I don't care a dead rat what the authorities thinks about it nuther," he is coining a figurative negative just as any popular narrator might do in any period of popular literature. But such examples are rare in modern English and French compared with those which popped like a flash into the brain of the shift *trouvère*.

To conclude, I account for the frequency of the figurative negative in Mediæval literature and its rarity in Modern literature, not by any decrease in the love of imagery or in our power of invention, but by the demand made upon the Mediæval poet and by the separation in Modern times between the written and the spoken language. As will be seen below, Spanish fiction, which is so essentially popular in its subject and style, offers in its dialogue the only considerable contribution to our list in modern Romance literature.

OLD FRENCH.

Abengue = $\frac{1}{2}$ of a parisis (Barbazan).

Mes cors ne vaut deus abeenges.

Barbazan: *Fab. et Contes*, v. i, p. 126.

Frese = strawberry.

Ne vaut une frese.

L'Escoufle, 3920.

Mançoi = coin of Mans.

Que n'i prenons vallissent ii mancois.

Girard de Viane, p. 5.

Neret = small copper coin (Jacob).

Cela ne vaut pas ung neret.

Jacob: *Rec. de Farces*, p. 279.

Poret = leek, wart.

Demander n'i valt un poret.

Barbazan: *Fab. et Contes*, v. i, p. 267.

ITALIAN: OLD AND MODERN.

Acca = H.

Non capiva un'acca di aritmetica.

De Amicis: *Cuore*, p. 76 (Milano, 1905).

Aguglia = needle.

Ch'al voto non capea ponto d'aguglia.

Boiardo: *O. I.*, lxxv, 31.

Cecio = chickpea.

Non curo più un cecio tutto il resto.

Boiardo: *O. I.*, i, 52.

Ette = "a thing of no value" (Körting).

Non c'importa un ette.

Forteguerri (1670-1730):

Ricciardetto, xxvii, 74.

Fola = fable < fabulam.

Una vil fola li sus Macon non stima.

Boiardo: *O. I.*, xxxiv, 66.

Genoì = a coin of Genoa.

Non lo prezzo un genoì.

Rimbaud de Vaqueiras: *Contrasto*.

Grosso = a coin.

Ne lascerei del suo valore un grosso.

Boiardo: *O. I.*, lii, 55.

Quadrante = small coin.

Io non gli stimarei un vil quadrante.

Cieco da Ferrara (1500 circ.): *Mambriano*.

Ravanello = radish.

Io non la stimo un marcio ravanello.

Forteguerri: *op. cit.*, ii, 51.

Zero = cipher.

È non è stato, al suo parere, un zero.

Pulci: *Il. M. M.*, xix, 84.

SPANISH: OLD AND MODERN.

Ardite = coin.

No se me da un ardite.

Cervantes: *El Licenciado Vidriera*.

Arveja = a tare, weed.

"Maguer que muchos son non valen tres arvejas."

Poema de Fernán González,

ed. Marden, p. 32, 39.

Bledo = straw.

Ni se me da de ello un bledo.

Pardo Bazán: *Pascual López*, p. 113

(Ginn ed.).

Castaña = chestnut.

Esta morralla que no vale una castaña asada.

Valdés: *La Aldea perdida*, p. 100.

cf. *Poema de Fernán González*, v. 175.

Clavo = nail.

Pues por este vale mucho

Quien por sí no vale un clavo.

Lope de Vega: Ballad quoted in

Rennert's *Life of L. de V.*, p. 85.

Comino = cummin seed.

Sin darle un comino por Jacinto.

Valdes: *op. cit.*, p. 212.

Dedo = finger.

No estoy de creerte un dedo.

Lope de Vega: *El Molino*, act i, sc. 14.

Demonio = devil.

Nosotros tenemos unos vecinos que no valen un demonio.

Padre Isla: *Gil Blas*, iii, 1.

Meaja = $\frac{1}{2}$ of maravedí.

"(Dezit le que) non le mejorare valia de una meaja."

Poema de Fernán González,

ed. Marden, p. 42.

Miaja = crumb.

Si, dije yo sin recordar miaja.

Pardo Bazán: *op. cit.*, p. 122.

Papel de fumar = a cigarette paper.

Ese pillo de Pimentó, que no vale ni un papel de fumar.

Blasco Ibáñez: *Arroz y Tartana*, p. 56.

Pepino = cucumber.

Vd. no valía un pepino para aguacil.

Padre Isla: *op. cit.*, ii, 4.

Pitoche = pipe, whistle.

Un pagaré firmado por tí no vale un pitoche.

Valera: *Juanita la Larga*, p. 231.

Pizca = mite.

No exagero pizca.

Pardo Bazán: *Una Cristiana*, p. 198.

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ON A NOTE TO *Hous of Fame*, 358.

To the Editors of *Mod. Lang. Notes*.

SIRS:—A year ago in the *M. L. N.*, Dr. William A. Nitze pointed out that Dr. Oskar Sommer's "unknown manuscript" of the *Prose Perceval* had already been used and discussed by the learned world. It would seem that Dr. Sommer's acquaintance with the literature of medieval Latin productions is just as extended and accurate as with Old-French literature.

Fourteen elegiac verses are cited at the end of Caxton's *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye* (ed. Sommer, 703). Sommer notes (lxxxvii) that "These Latin verses, with some slight variations, occur as 'Versus Magistri Hildeberti,' in ms. Cleopatra, A viii. ff. 56-58; without an author's name in mss. Royal 13 A. iv, ff. 22-23; Vespasian, B. xiv, f. 18, and Harley, 3202, ff. 114-115. Leyser wrongly inscribes them to Hildebert. . . . The poem is identical, as far as 153 lines are concerned, with the 'Ilias' in two

books of Simon Chèvre d'Or. Compare H. Dunger, *Die Sage vom Trojanischen (sic) Kriege*, Leipzig, 1869, 8vo., pp. 22-3, and *Histoire littéraire de France*, xii, p. 487, etc."

The poem in 90 verses, written in rimed leonine elegiacs, "Pergama flere volo," is extant in numerous manuscripts and has been published six times, of which the most recent and best edition is that of Hauréau in the *Notices et extraits des manuscrits*, xxviii, 2, 438 (1878). Hauréau showed that there was the best of evidence to regard Hildebert as the author (*l. c.* 441 ff.; cf. xxix, 2, 238), and this view has been accepted as correct (cf. Meyer v. Speyer, *Nachrichten der Gesellschaft der Wissens. zu Göttingen*, 1907, 144-145). The fourteen lines printed by Caxton represent vv. 1-2, 89-90, 31-38, 29-30, 27-30, of Hauréau's edition. The poem was not printed by Leyser, and there is not a verse of it identical with the poem of Simon, ascribed to Hildebert; so that the references to Dunger and to the *Hist. litt.* are quite superfluous. Sommer could have found more accurate information in Ward's descriptions (*Catalogue of Romance*, i, 27-29, 30-31, 32, and cf. 34) of the mss. he cites. Ward, himself, led astray by two of the mss., makes an anonymous poem, "Viribus arte, minis," one with Hildebert's poem, which, however, he does not identify with the poem of Simon, which is only found in one of the manuscripts cited by Sommer.

Sommer's misinformation has confused at least one of his readers. Skeat in a supplementary note on *Hous of Fame*, 358-359:

"Lo, right as she hath doon, now she
Wol do eftsones, hardly"

noted that the pentameter;

"Cras poterunt fieri, turpia sicut heri,"

cited as a comment in mss. F and B, was the tenth line of those quoted by Caxton, but he had failed to find it in Leyser's collection as denoted by Sommer (*Works of Chaucer*, vi, 405). The verse in question is v. 36 in Hauréau's edition of the poem, or v. 38 in that of Du Ménil (*Poésies latines antérieures au douzième siècle*, 311). The English couplet is a free translation of the Latin verse; and the manuscript note on its source seems to be as authoritative as in other cases (cf. *e. g.*, *H. of F.*, 350, 367). It is interesting to know that the English poet was acquainted with this short poem on the "matière de Troie," as well as with the more important works of Benoît de Sainte-More, and Guido delle Colonne.

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